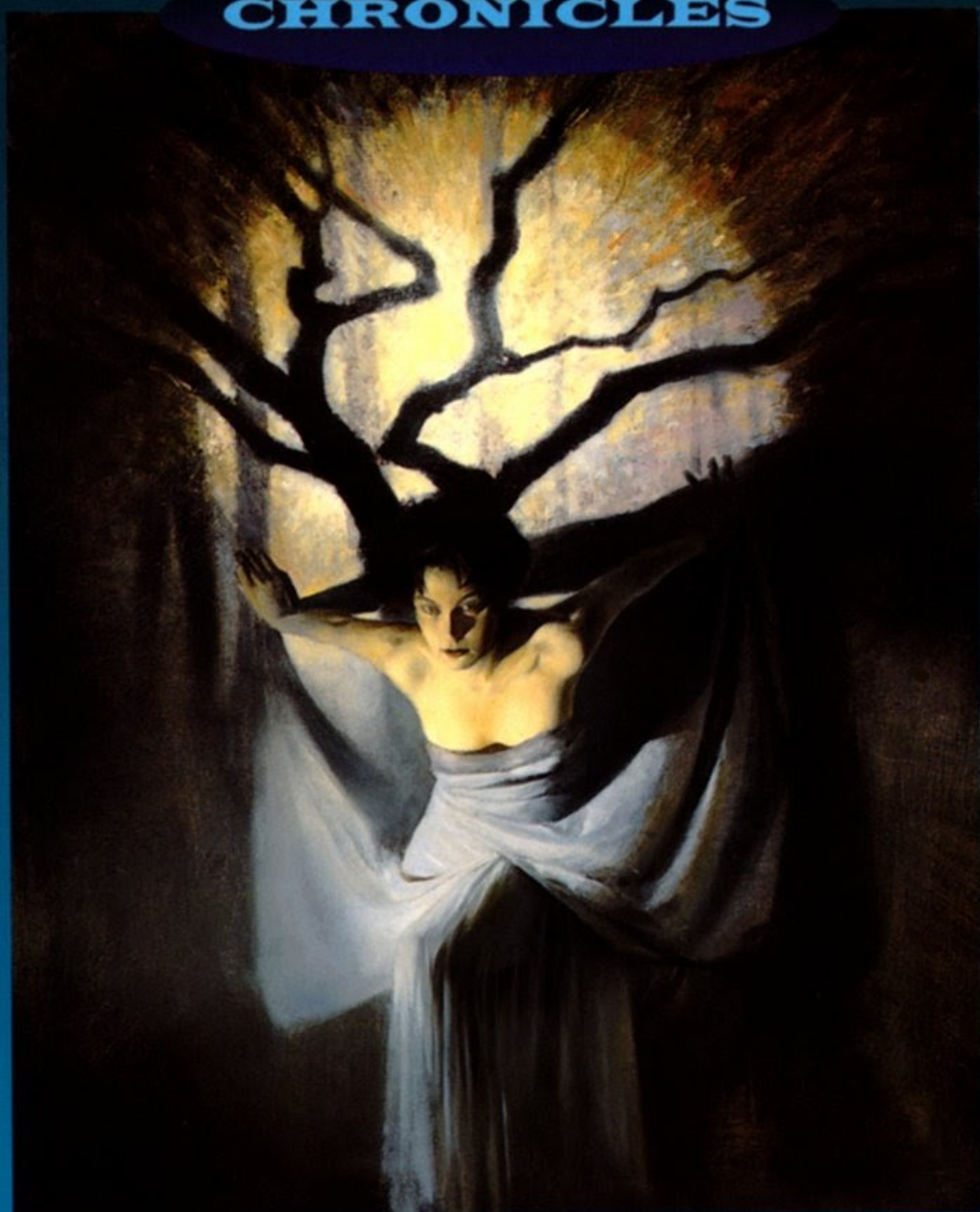


RAY BRADBURY

CHRONICLES



⇒ VOLUME 6 ⇐

GUY DAVIS • JACK KAMEN • MICHAEL LARK
ROSS MACDONALD • JON J MUTH
P. CRAIG RUSSELL • JOHN VAN FLEET

RAY BRADBURY CHRONICLES

VI

Smith

*McLan
Russell*

by Davis

*My Son
Smith*

A word



This is a special edition limited to 1000 of which this is number 934.

RAY
BRADBURY
CHRONICLES

I
The April Witch

II
Trapdoor

III
Picasso Summer



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INTRODUCTION

One must be on the alert, always. It matters not what areas of life you're in. Things are always creeping up on you; ideas, hidden in the underbrush, wait low to be born. Sometimes they hit you over the head with a rubber hammer. Sometimes they hit you in the face with a fake lemon pie. On occasion you walk on them.

The problem is, most people are clever at avoiding ideas. They duck and weave and refuse to be crept up on. They pretend not to notice that a rubber hammer has hit them or that they are walking right across a notion, fancy, or concept.

My business is letting the pie hit me square on. And since I am always looking down, watchful for hopscotch pentagrams or snails, I surprise myself with lalapaloozin' story ideas. Take "Picasso Summer," for instance . . .

I was walking on the beach with my wife and several friends, thirty-six years ago, and picked up a Popsicle stick and started to draw in the wet sand. As I drew, I said, "Wouldn't it be something to be walking along the beach in Southern France and meet up with Picasso drawing his fabulous mythological beasts on the shore?" "Wow!" I added, and cried: "Gimme a pencil, someone!" My wife handed me a pad and pencil and I wrote down the opening of "Picasso Summer."

"Trapdoor" was another surprise hidden out in the open and waiting. My wife and I moved into our new home with our four daughters thirty-five years ago. We were in the house for some ten years before I noticed a trapdoor in one of the ceilings. My gosh, I thought, has that trapdoor been there all these years? How come I didn't notice? And what's behind the trapdoor, up there in the unseen attic? Bam! I wrote the story that night. You could write it, too. Just climb up a ladder in your house and open the trapdoor (if you have one) and stick your head in . . .

"The April Witch" was much longer in arriving. It's the sort of idea you imagine when you are five, eight or twelve—or seventy-three, if you are me. We all like to wonder about how it feels to be a dog, a cat, a hummingbird, or a whale. I couldn't stand it any longer, imagining such things, so I created a wondrous girl-woman, Cecy, and let her fly about, ricocheting through the minds and looking out the eyes of frogs, crickets, sparrows, great danes, cows, and—other young women like herself. In no time at all, a few hours, "April Witch" was born. Pop inside it and look out through Cecy's eyes!

Ron Bradbury

Jon J Muth is an acknowledged master of the painted graphic novel. His work in this area includes *Moonshadow* and *Havok & Wolverine—Meltdown* for Marvel/Epic, *Dracula—A Symphony in Moonlight* and *Nightmares* for NBM, *The Mythology Of An Abandoned City* for Tundra, and *Fritz Lang's M* for Eclipse comics. He is currently working with Grant Morrison on a new graphic novel called *The Mystery Play*. "The April Witch" is one of his favorite stories.

John Van Fleet's credits include illustrations for various Topps trading cards (including the *Star Wars* and *Jurassic Park* card sets) and Clive Barker's *Primal* for Dark Horse Comics. He is currently working with John Rieber on a six-part story for DC's Vertigo line entitled *Shadows Fall*, due out spring 1994. John's work has been featured in galleries throughout the eastern United States.

John Ney Rieber's credits include authoring the novels *The Gates of the Night* and *Some are Angels*. His graphic novel scripts include *Tell Me, Dark*, his collaboration with author Karl Edward Wagner and artist Kent Williams, and *Shadows Fall* with John Van Fleet, both for DC comics.

Ross MacDonald was born on an air force base in Canada and moved to New York City to pursue his career as a professional illustrator. A lifetime comics fan, Ross's work has been strongly influenced by comics art, the work of Jack Kirby in particular. Ross's work has appeared in *Newsweek*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Esquire*, *New York*, and many other magazines worldwide. Recently, he painted the covers for the reprint line of the novels of John Steinbeck. Ross also designed stage sets for the award-winning Broadway musical *Tommy*.

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The April Witch

INTO THE AIR, OVER THE VALLEYS, UNDER THE STARS, ABOVE A RIVER, A POND, A ROAD, CECY FLEW. INVISIBLE AS NEW SPRING WINDS, SHE SOARED IN DOVES, STOPPED IN TREES AND LIVED IN BLOSSOMS. SHE LIVED IN NEW APRIL GRASSES, IN SWEET CLEAR LIQUIDS RISING FROM THE MUSKY EARTH.

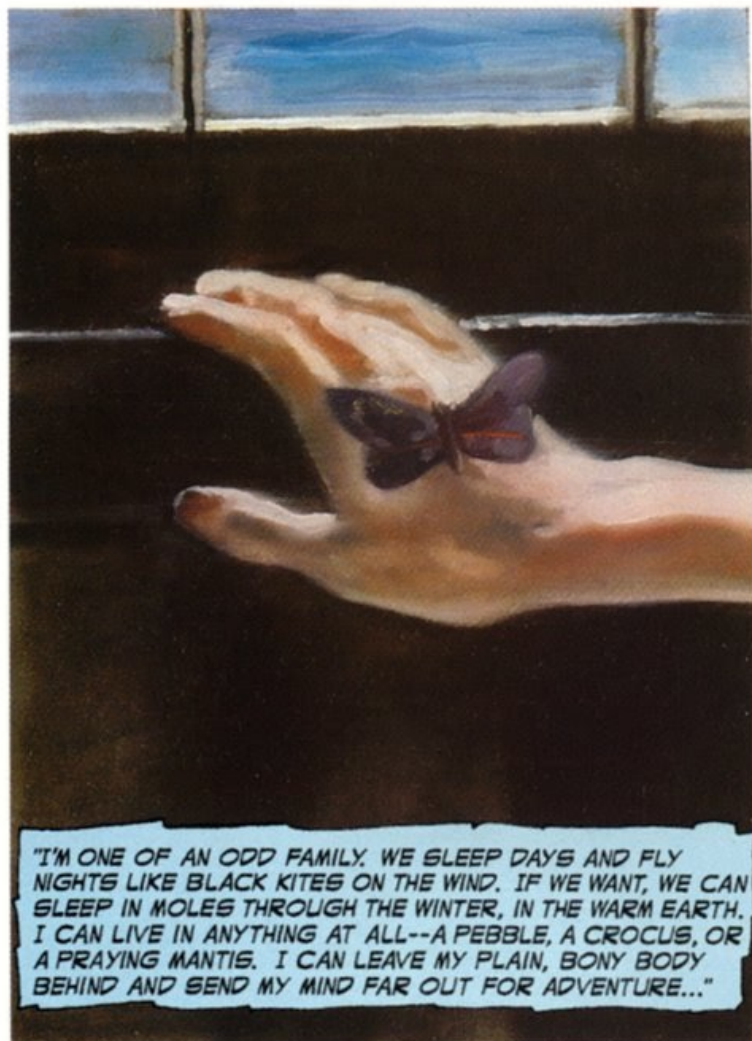
"IT'S SPRING. I'LL BE IN EVERY LIVING THING IN THE WORLD TONIGHT."

HERS WAS AN ADAPTABLY QUICK MIND FLOWING UNSEEN UPON ILLINOIS WINDS ON THIS ONE EVENING OF HER LIFE WHEN SHE WAS SEVENTEEN.

"I WANT TO BE IN LOVE."

SHE HAD SAID IT AT SUPPER. "PATIENCE," HAD BEEN HER PARENT'S ADVICE. "REMEMBER, YOU'RE REMARKABLE. WE CAN'T MIX OR MARRY WITH ORDINARY FOLK. WE'D LOSE OUR MAGICAL POWERS IF WE DID. YOU'D LOSE YOUR ABILITY TO TRAVEL BY MAGIC... SO, BE CAREFUL!"

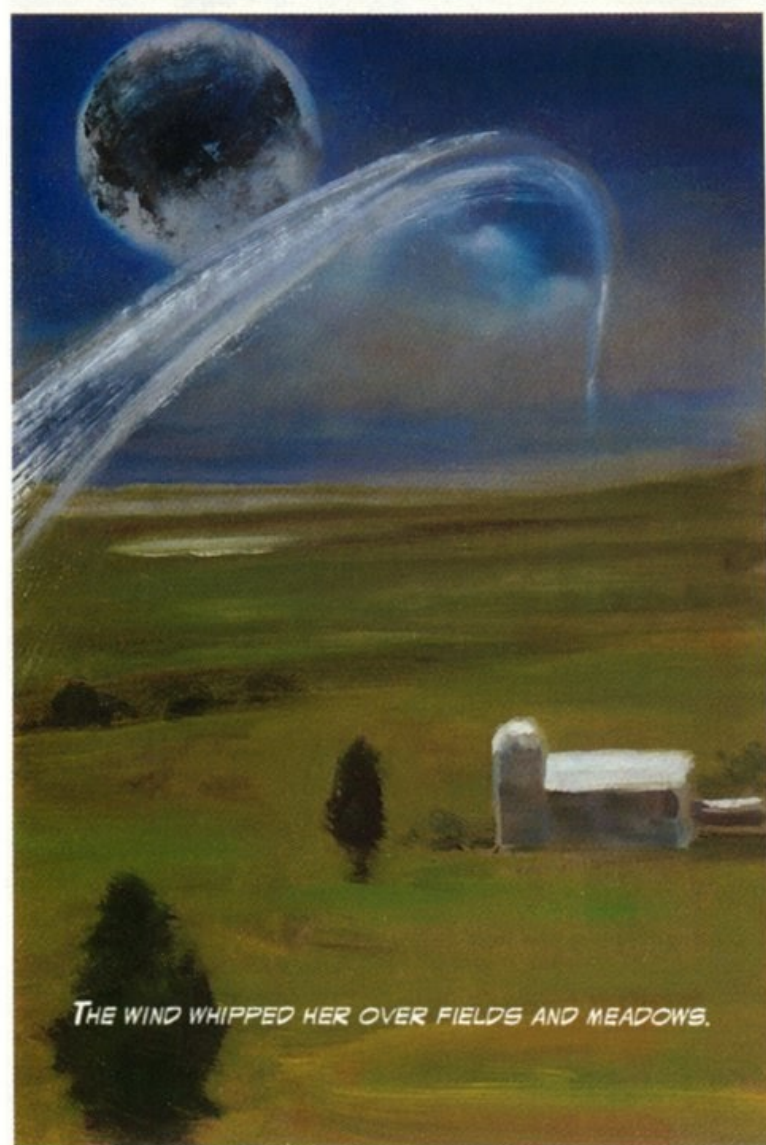
BUT IN HER HIGH BEDROOM, CECY HAD TOUCHED PERFUME TO HER THROAT AND STRETCHED OUT, TREMBLING AND APPREHENSIVE, ON HER FOUR-POSTER AS A MOON ROSE OVER ILLINOIS COUNTRY.



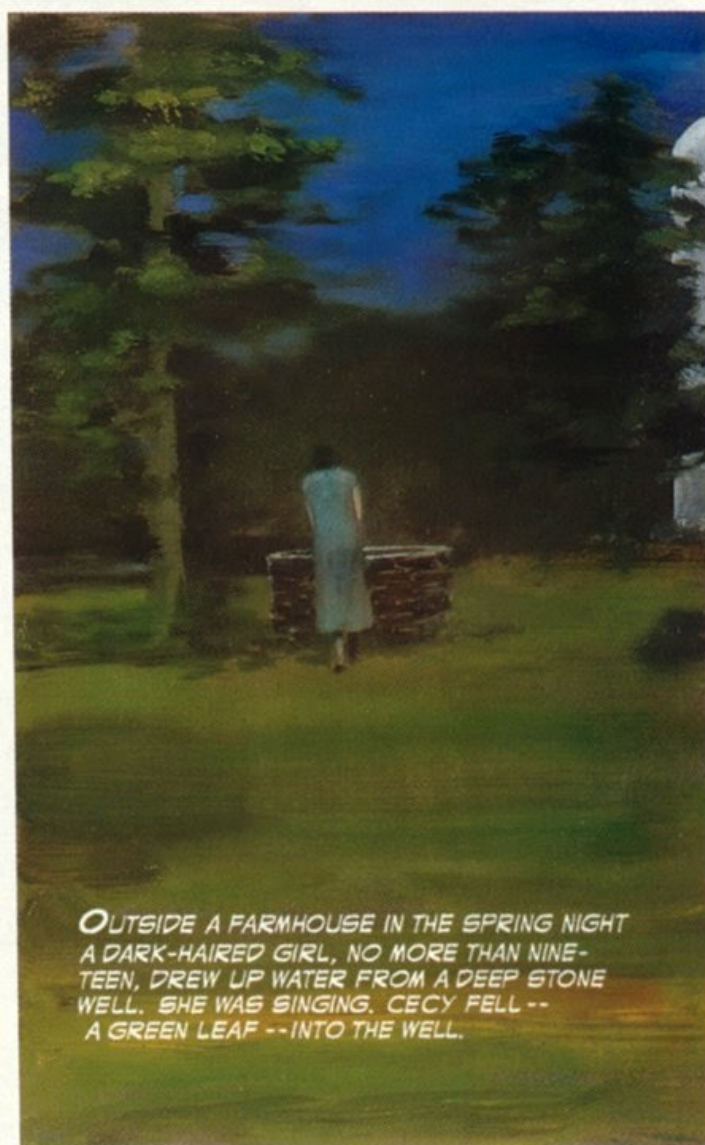
"I'M ONE OF AN ODD FAMILY. WE SLEEP DAYS AND FLY NIGHTS LIKE BLACK KITES ON THE WIND. IF WE WANT, WE CAN SLEEP IN MOLES THROUGH THE WINTER, IN THE WARM EARTH. I CAN LIVE IN ANYTHING AT ALL--A PEBBLE, A CROCUS, OR A PRAYING MANTIS. I CAN LEAVE MY PLAIN, BONY BODY BEHIND AND SEND MY MIND FAR OUT FOR ADVENTURE..."



"NOW!"



THE WIND WHIPPED HER OVER FIELDS AND MEADOWS.



OUTSIDE A FARMHOUSE IN THE SPRING NIGHT A DARK-HAIRED GIRL, NO MORE THAN NINE-TEEN, DREW UP WATER FROM A DEEP STONE WELL. SHE WAS SINGING. CECY FELL -- A GREEN LEAF -- INTO THE WELL.

SHE LAY IN THE TENDER MOSS OF THE WELL, GAZING UP THROUGH DARK COOLNESS. NOW IN A WATER DROPLET! AT LAST, WITHIN A COLD CUP. SHE FELT HERSELF LIFTED TO THE GIRL'S WARM LIPS. THERE WAS A SOFT NIGHT SOUND OF DRINKING. CECY LOOKED OUT FROM THE GIRL'S EYES.



WHO'S THERE?

"ONLY THE WIND."

ONLY THE WIND.

"WHAT'S YOUR NAME?"

ANN LEARY.
NOW WHY SHOULD I SAY
THAT OUT LOUD?

"ANN, ANN. ANN, YOU'RE GOING TO
BE IN LOVE."

ANN!

IS THAT YOU, TOM?

WHO ELSE?

I'M NOT SPEAKING
TO YOU!

NO!

LOOK WHAT
YOU'VE DONE!

LOOK WHAT
YOU MADE
ME DO!

CECY YANKED A HIDDEN COPPER VENTRILOQUIST'S WIRE AND THE PRETTY MOUTH POPPED OPEN:

THANK YOU!

OH, SO YOU HAVE MANNERS?

NOT FOR YOU, NO!

I DON'T KNOW. I'VE GONE MAD. OH, GO AWAY!

HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND? WILL YOU GO WITH ME TO THE DANCE TONIGHT? IT'S SPECIAL. TELL YOU WHY LATER.

NO.

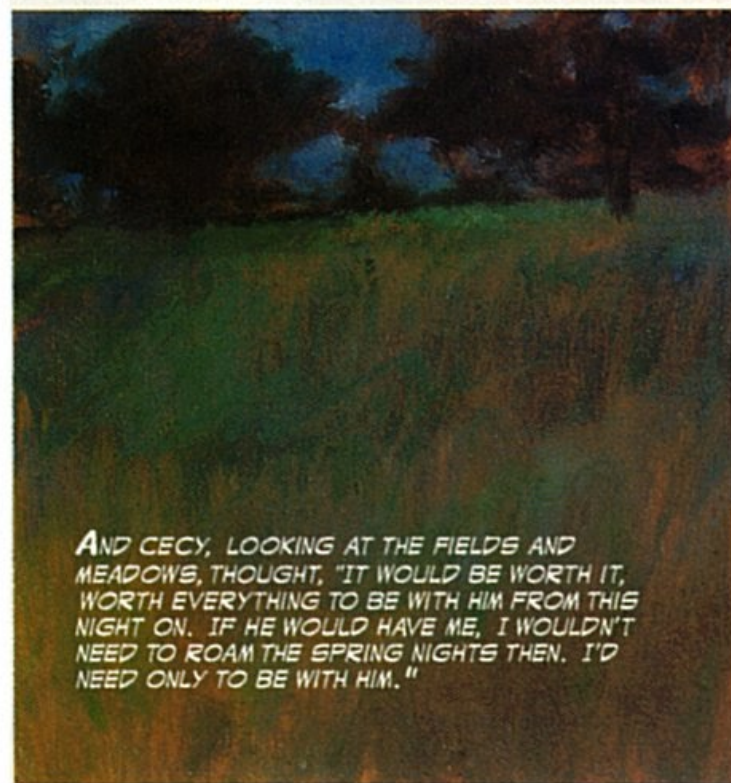
"YES! I'VE NEVER DANCED. I'VE NEVER WORN A LONG GOWN, ALL RUSTLY. I WANT THAT. I WANT TO DANCE ALL NIGHT. I'VE NEVER KNOWN WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE IN A WOMAN DANCING."

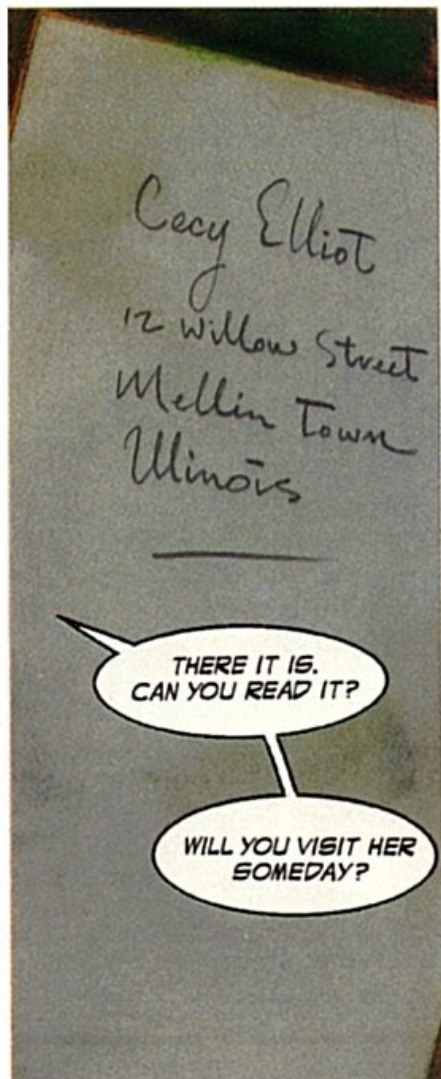
YES. I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I'LL GO TO THE DANCE WITH YOU TONIGHT, TOM.

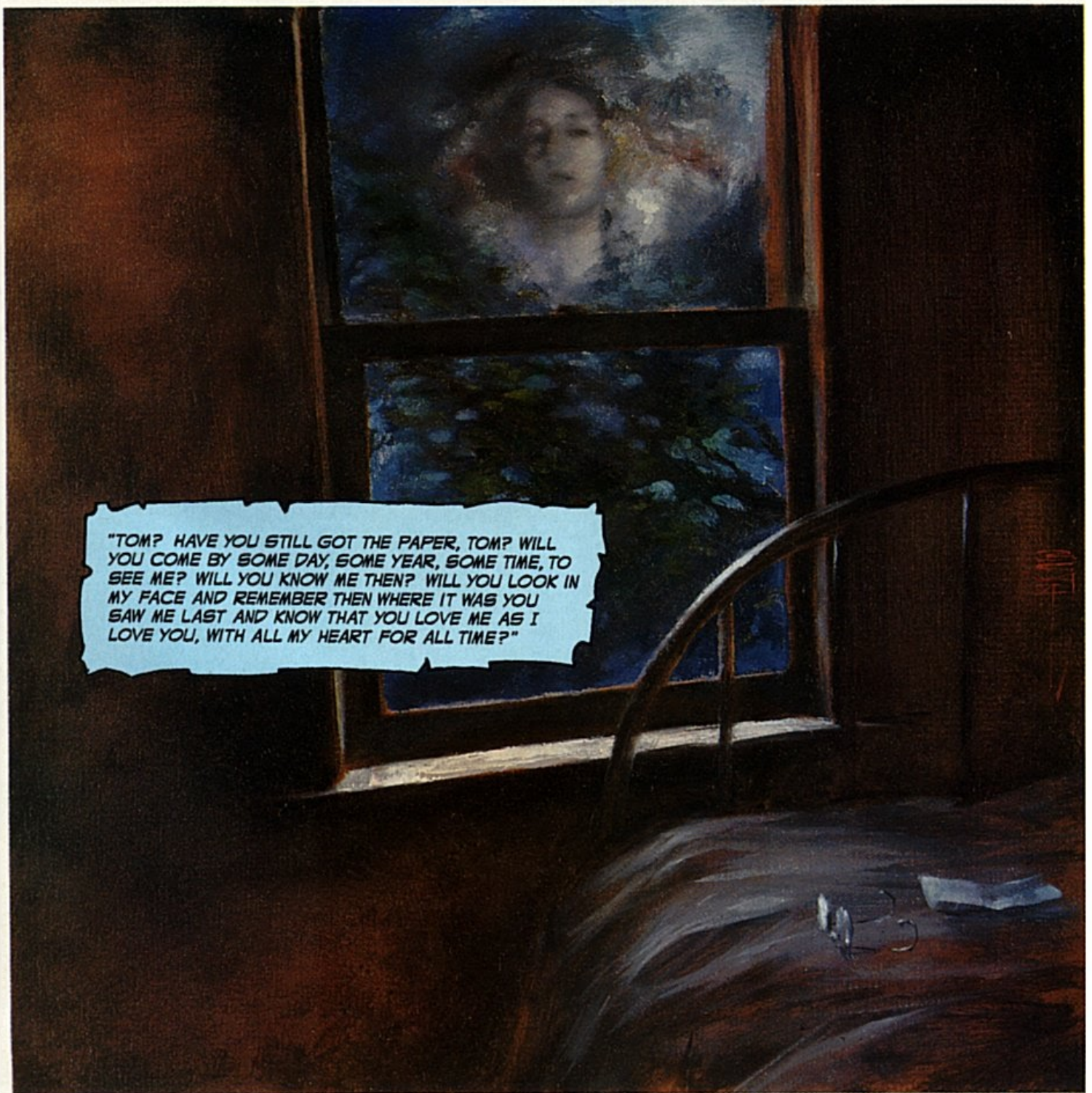
"FATHER AND MOTHER WOULD NEVER PERMIT IT. DOGS, CATS, LOCUSTS, LEAVES, EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER I'VE KNOWN, BUT NEVER A WOMAN IN SPRING, NEVER ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS. OH, PLEASE--WE MUST GO TO THAT DANCE!"











"TOM? HAVE YOU STILL GOT THE PAPER, TOM? WILL YOU COME BY SOME DAY, SOME YEAR, SOME TIME, TO SEE ME? WILL YOU KNOW ME THEN? WILL YOU LOOK IN MY FACE AND REMEMBER THEN WHERE IT WAS YOU SAW ME LAST AND KNOW THAT YOU LOVE ME AS I LOVE YOU, WITH ALL MY HEART FOR ALL TIME?"

CLARA PECK HAD LIVED IN THE OLD HOUSE FOR TEN YEARS BEFORE SHE MADE THE STRANGE DISCOVERY. SHE HAD MARCHED UP AND DOWNSTAIRS A THOUSAND TIMES, AND NEVER SEEN.

IT CAN'T BE! HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO BLIND? THERE'S AN ATTIC IN MY HOUSE!

Trapdoor

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue short-sleeved dress and black shoes, stands in a room with green walls. She is looking up at a square trapdoor in the ceiling. To her left is a wooden staircase with a railing. In the background, there is a doorway and a small table with a plant. The scene is illuminated by a warm, yellow light.

BEFORE LUNCH, SHE FOUND HERSELF STANDING UNDER THE TRAPDOOR AGAIN, HER TOO BRIGHT EYES DARING, FIXING, STARING.

NOW I'VE DISCOVERED THE DAMN THING, WHAT DO I DO WITH IT?

STORAGE ROOM UP THERE I BET. WELL--

AND SHE WENT AWAY, VAGUELY TROUBLED, FEELING HER MIND SLIPPING OFF...

TO HELL WITH THAT, CLARA PECK! YOU'RE ONLY FIFTY-SEVEN, NOT SENILE, YET, BY GOD!

STILL, WHY HADN'T SHE NOTICED?

IT WAS THE SILENCE--THAT WAS IT. HER ROOF HAD NEVER LEAKED, NO WATER HAD EVER TAPPED HER CEILINGS, THE BEAMS NEVER SHIFTED IN THE WIND, AND THERE WERE NO MICE. THE HOUSE HAD STAYED SILENT, AND SHE HAD STAYED BLIND.

SHE WENT TO BED EARLY. IT WAS DURING THAT NIGHT THAT SHE HEARD THE FIRST FAINT TAPPING FROM ABOVE, BEHIND THE BLANK CEILING'S PALE, LUNAR FACE.

GOING DOWNSTAIRS TO FIX BREAKFAST, SHE FIXED THE TRAPDOOR WITH HER STEADY STARE.

AROUND MIDNIGHT OF THE THIRD NIGHT SHE HEARD THE WHATEVER-THEY-WERE SOUNDS DRIFTING ACROSS HER BEDROOM CEILING.

LYING FLAT IN HER BED, SHE WATCHED THE CEILING SO FIXEDLY SHE FELT SHE COULD X-RAY WHATEVER IT WAS THAT CAVORTED BEHIND THE PLASTER.

MOUSE?

HELL, WHY BOTHER TO LOOK AT AN EMPTY ATTIC? NEXT WEEK, MAYBE.

FOR ABOUT THREE DAYS THE TRAPDOOR VANISHED. THAT IS, SHE FORGOT TO LOOK AT IT, SO IT MIGHT AS WELL NOT HAVE BEEN THERE.

A FLEA CIRCUS? A TRIBE OF GYPSY MICE IN EXODUS FROM A NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE? PROBABLY...

THE PATTERNS INCREASED. THE SOFT PROWLINGS BEGAN TO CLUSTER TOWARD AN AREA ABOVE AND BEYOND HER BEDROOM DOOR. SLOWLY, CLARA SAT UP.

THE TRAPDOOR. AS IF SUMMONED BY HER WARMTH, THE SOUNDS OF THE TINY LOST GHOST FEET RUSHED TO CLUSTER AT THE TRAPDOOR RIM ITSELF.

NO! THEY HEAR ME, THEY WANT ME TO--

SHE PEERED OUT INTO A HALL FLOODED WITH COLD LIGHT FROM A FULL MOON, WHICH POURED THROUGH A LANDING WINDOW TO SHOW HER...

THE TRAPDOOR SHUDDERED GENTLY WITH THE TINY ROCKING WEIGHTS OF WHATEVER IT WAS A-RUSTLE THERE. LOUDER, THEN LOUDER STILL...

...WHEN THE PHONE RANG. CLARA FELT A TON OF BLOOD PLUNGE FROM A BROKEN WEIGHT DOWN HER FRAME TO CRUSH HER TOES.

GAH!

RRIING

WHO IS IT?!

CLARA! IT'S EMMA CROWLEY! WHAT'S WRONG?

CLARA SANK TO THE EDGE OF THE BED, THE WEIGHT OF EMMA'S VOICE PULLING HER DOWN.

CLARA, ARE--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU'RE NOT SICK ARE YOU? THE HOUSE ISN'T ON FIRE, OR ANYTHING?

NO, NO. I'M ALL RIGHT.

CLARA SAT LOOKING AT THE RECEIVER FOR A FULL MINUTE, AND THEN AT LAST PLACED THE PHONE BLINDLY BACK IN ITS CRADLE.

SHE WENT BACK TO LOOK AT THE TRAPDOOR. IT WAS QUIET.

THINK YOU'RE SMART, DON'T YOU?



EMMA! YOU SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME! WHY ARE YOU CALLING THIS LATE?

I COULDN'T SLEEP. I HAD THIS HUNCH--ALL OF A SUDDEN I THOUGHT CLARA'S NOT WELL, OR SHE'S HURT...

THANK GOD. SILLY ME. FORGIVE?

FORGIVEN.

WELL THEN...GOOD NIGHT.



THE SOUNDS RETURNED THREE NIGHTS LATER, AND THEY WERE...LARGER.

HMMM...NOT
MICE. GOOD-SIZED
RATS, EH?

IN ANSWER, THE
CEILING ABOVE
EXECUTED AN
INTRICATE
BALLET WITHOUT
MUSIC. THIS
TOE-DANCING OF
A MOST
PECULIAR SORT
CONTINUED UNTIL
THE MOON SANK.
THEN THE HOUSE
GREW SILENT
AGAIN.

BY THE END OF THE
WEEK, THE SOUNDS
ECHOED IN EVERY
UPSTAIRS ROOM.

ON THE TENTH NIGHT,
WITH THE SOUNDS COMING
IN DRUMBEATS AND
WEIRD SYNCOPATIONS, AT
THREE A.M., CLARA
DIALED EMMA CROWLEY.



CLARA!
I KNEW YOU'D
CALL!

I'VE BEEN
LYING HERE
THINKING OF
YOU. I WANTED TO
CALL, BUT I FELT
LIKE A FOOL.
SOMETHING IS
WRONG,
YES?

EMMA,
ANSWER ME
THIS. IF A HOUSE
HAS AN EMPTY
ATTIC FOR YEARS,
AND ALL OF A
SUDDEN HAS AN
ATTIC FULL OF
THINGS--HOW
COME?

I DIDN'T
KNOW YOU HAD
AN ATTIC--

WHO DID?
LISTEN, WHAT
STARTED AS MICE
THEN SOUNDED
LIKE RATS NOW
SOUNDS LIKE CATS
RUNNING AROUND
UP THERE.
WHAT'LL I
DO?

THE
TELEPHONE
NUMBER FOR
THE RATZAWAY
PEST TEAM IS...
WAIT A MINUTE...
HERE, MAIN
77-999.

YOU
SURE
SOMETHING'S
IN YOUR
ATTIC?

THE
WHOLE
DAMN HIGH
SCHOOL
TRACK
TEAM.

WHO
USED TO LIVE
IN YOUR HOUSE,
CLARA? I MEAN,
IT'S BEEN CLEAN
ALL THIS TIME,
RIGHT, AND NOW
IT'S INFESTED.
ANYONE
EVER DIE
THERE?



DIE?

SURE.
IF SOMEONE
DIED THERE,
MAYBE YOU
HAVEN'T GOT
MICE AT
ALL.

YOU
TRYING TO
TELL ME I HAVE
GHOSTS? NO, I
JUST HAVE FRIENDS
WHO TRY TO SPOOK
ME WITH THOUGHTS
OF THEM. EMMA,
DON'T CALL ME
AGAIN!

BUT
YOU CALLED
ME!



CLARA PECK WENT BACK TO BED. BUT, STRAINING HER EARS, OUT IN THE HALL....COULD IT BE?



VERY SOFTLY, THE TRAPDOOR IN THE CEILING SQUEALED. AND OPENED WIDE.



THE DOOR FELL UP, IN, AND DOWN WITH A THUD. CLARA JUMPED, RAN, LOCKED THE BEDROOM DOOR AND LEAPED BACK INTO BED.



AT SIX IN THE MORNING
AFTER A SLEEPLESS NIGHT,
CLARA WENT DOWNSTAIRS
KEEPING HER EYES
STRAIGHT AHEAD.

STILL, AT SEVEN-THIRTY ON A BRIGHT MORNING...

IN THE WAY THAT MR. TIMMONS STROLLED WITH INSOLENT DISDAIN UP THE WALK, CLARA SAW THAT HE KNEW EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD ABOUT NICE, TERMITES, OLD MAIDS AND LATE-NIGHT SOUNDS.

CLARA ALMOST SLAMMED THE DOOR ON HIM FOR THE WAY HIS EYES PEELED AWAY HER DRESS, HER FLESH, HER THOUGHTS. SHE WAS INCENSED.

HALFWAY DOWN
SHE GLANCED
BACK, AND
LAUGHED.

SILLY ME!

THE TRAPDOOR WAS
NOT OPEN AT ALL.

HELLO, RATZAWAY?

DON'T
JUST STAND
THERE! MAKE
YOURSELF
USEFUL. THIS
WAY!





SEE IF YOU CAN MAKE SENSE OUT OF THE DAMN NOISES UP THERE. AND DON'T OVERCHARGE ME WHEN YOU'RE DONE.

I'VE GOT TO GO SHOPPING. DO YOU KNOW WHAT MICE SOUND LIKE IN ATTICS?

I DAMN WELL DO, LADY.

CLEAN UP YOUR LANGUAGE! YOU KNOW RATS? THESE COULD BE RATS...OR BIGGER. WHAT COULD BE BIGGER?

YOU GOT ANY RACCOONS AROUND HERE?

HEY, LADY, HOW WOULD I--

BUT HOW'D THEY GET IN?



HERE THEY BOTH STOPPED, FOR A SOUND HAD COME FROM ABOVE. A SMALL ITCH OF A SOUND, AT FIRST. THEN A SCRATCH. THEN A THUMP LIKE A HEARTBEAT.

CLARA NODDED, SATISFIED.

SAY, DID A SEA CAPTAIN EVER LIVE IN THIS HOUSE?

THE SOUND CAME AGAIN, LOUDER. THE WHOLE HOUSE SEEMED TO DRIFT AND WHINE WITH THE WEIGHT THAT SHIFTED ABOVE.



SOUNDS LIKE CARGO--CARGO ON A SHIP SLIDING AROUND.

ON THE OTHER HAND...YOU GOT A GREENHOUSE UP THERE, OR SOMETHING? SOUNDS LIKE PLANTS...

...OR A YEAST, MAYBE, BIG AS A DOG-HOUSE, GETTING OUT OF HAND. I HEARD OF A MAN ONCE, RAISED YEAST IN HIS CELLAR. IT--

I'LL BE BACK IN AN HOUR! JUMP!

TIMMONS STOOD AT THE FOOT OF THE LADDER, LOOKING UP. THEN HE SHRUGGED, THOUGHT "WHAT THE HELL?" AND...



WHEN CLARA PECK MARCHED BACK AN HOUR LATER, THE RATZAWAY TRUCK STILL STOOD SILENTLY AT THE CURB.

SHE STOPPED AND LISTENED TO THE HOUSE. SILENCE.

THIS IS ODD. MR. TIMMONS?

HELL...THOUGHT HE'D BE DONE BY NOW. STRANGE MAN, TROMPING AROUND, SWEARING--

ANYBODY HOME?

BY TWO O'CLOCK THE SILENCE HUNG ABOUT HER LIKE A CLOUD OF FLOOR POLISH.

MR. TIMMONS?

WELL, HE'S OBVIOUSLY NOT UP THERE...HE WOULDN'T CLIMB UP AND SHUT HIMSELF IN. DAMN FOOL'S JUST GONE AWAY.

RATZAWAY?

THE PEST TEAM OWNER SHOWED UP A HALF HOUR LATER TO RETRIEVE THE ABANDONED TRUCK. CLARA INQUIRED ABOUT HIS MISSING EMPLOYEE.

NO SWEAT, MA'AM. CHARLIE'S BEEN ON A FEW BENDERS LATELY. HE'LL SHOW UP TOMORROW TO BE FIRED. WHAT WAS HE DOING HERE?

OH...HE WAS JUST LOOKING AT EVERYTHING.

I'LL COME BY MYSELF, TOMORROW.

HE DIDN'T SEE YOU, EITHER.

CLARA ATE DINNER EARLY AND WAS IN BED BY TEN O'CLOCK. BUT SHE CHOSE THE OLD DOWNSTAIRS MAID'S ROOM, FOR LONG YEARS UNUSED. SHE WAITED, LISTENING IN THE DARK, RIGID AS A TOMB CARVING UNDER THE SHEET.

AROUND MIDNIGHT, A WIND PASSED BY. HER EYES FLICKED WIDE. THE BEAMS OF THE HOUSE TREMBLED.

CLARA LIFTED HER HEAD. SOMETHING WHISPERED EVER SO SOFTLY IN THE ATTIC. SHE SAT UP.

THUMP

THE SOUND GREW LOUDER, HEAVIER, LIKE A LARGE BUT SHAPELESS ANIMAL, PROWLING IN THE ATTIC.

SHE STEPPED OUT INTO THE HALL, MOVED STEALTHILY UP THE STAIRS, AND RAISED HER EYES--

THUD!

AS SHE WATCHED, VERY SLOWLY THE TRAPDOOR OPENED TO SHOW HER A WAITING SQUARE OF DARKNESS, LIKE A MINE SHAFT GOING UP WITHOUT END.

I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ENOUGH!

SHE RUSHED DOWN TO THE KITCHEN, CAME STORMING BACK WITH HAMMER AND NAILS.



I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THIS! NO MORE, DO YOU HEAR? STOP!



AT THE TOP OF THE LADDER SHE HAD TO STRETCH UP INTO THE ATTIC, INTO THE DARKNESS, WITH ONE HAND AND ARM.

NOW!

AT THAT VERY INSTANT, AS IF SOMETHING HAD SEIZED HER HEAD, AS IF SHE WERE A CORK PULLED FROM A BOTTLE...



...HER ENTIRE BODY WAS YANKED UP INTO THE ATTIC.



SHE VANISHED LIKE A MAGICIAN'S HANDKERCHIEF. THERE WAS NO GASP, NO SCREAM.



BECAUSE OF THE QUALITY OF SILENCE IN THE OLD HOUSE, THE TRAPDOOR WAS NOT NOTICED AGAIN...UNTIL THE NEW TENANTS HAD BEEN IN THE HOUSE FOR ABOUT TEN YEARS.



SLAM

THEN, FOR NO SEEN REASON, THE TRAPDOOR SLAMMED FLAT DOWN SHUT.



PICASSO SUMMER



GEORGE AND ALICE SMITH DETRAINED AT BIARRITZ ONE SUMMER NOON, AND IN AN HOUR HAD RUN THROUGH THEIR HOTEL, ONTO THE BEACH, INTO THE OCEAN, AND BACK OUT TO BAKE UPON THE SAND.

TO SEE GEORGE SMITH SPRAWLED BURNING THERE, YOU'D THINK HIM ONLY A TOURIST-- FLOWN FRESH AS ICED LETTUCE TO EUROPE AND SOON TO BE TRANSSHIPPED HOME.

BUT HERE WAS A MAN WHO LOVED ART MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF.

"THERE..." GEORGE SMITH SIGHED. ANOTHER OUNCE OF PERSPIRATION TRICKLED DOWN HIS CHEST.

BOIL OUT THE OHIO TAP WATER, HE THOUGHT, THEN DRINK DOWN THE BEST BORDEAUX. SILT YOUR BLOOD WITH RICH FRENCH SEDIMENT SO YOU'LL SEE WITH NATIVE EYES.

WHY? WHY EAT, BREATHE, DRINK EVERYTHING FRENCH? SO THAT, GIVEN TIME, HE MIGHT REALLY BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE GENIUS OF ONE MAN.

HIS MOUTH MOVED, FORMING A NAME.

GEORGE? I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THINKING. I CAN READ YOUR LIPS.

AND?

PICASSO.

HE WINCED. SOMEDAY SHE WOULD LEARN TO PRONOUNCE THAT NAME.

PLEASE. RELAX.

ALL RIGHT. PICASSO'S HERE. DOWN THE COAST A FEW MILES AWAY.

BUT YOU MUST FORGET IT OR OUR VACATION'S RUINED.

I WISH I'D NEVER HEARD THE RUMOR.



IF ONLY
YOU LIKED OTHER
PAINTERS.

OTHERS? YES, THERE WERE OTHERS.

HE COULD BREAKFAST MOST CON-
GENIALLY OF CARAVAGGIO'S AUTUMN
PEARS AND MIDNIGHT PLUMS. FOR
LUNCH: THOSE VAN GOGH
SUNFLOWERS, THOSE BLOOMS A
BLIND MAN MIGHT READ WITH ONE
RUSH OF SCORCHED FINGERS DOWN
FIERY CANVAS.

BUT THE GREAT FEAST? WHO ELSE
BUT THE CREATOR OF GIRL BEFORE
A MIRROR AND GUERNICA?



ALICE, HOW
CAN I EXPLAIN?

COMING DOWN THE TRAIN, I
THOUGHT, GOOD LORD! IT'S ALL
PICASSO COUNTRY!

BUT WAS IT REALLY? HE WONDERED.
A MANDOLIN RIPE AS A FRUIT IN SOME
MAN'S THOUSAND FINGERPRINTING
HANDS, BILLBOARD TATTERS BLOWING
LIKE CONFETTI IN NIGHT WINDS—HOW
MUCH WAS PICASSO, HOW MUCH
GEORGE SMITH STARING 'ROUND THE
WORLD WITH WILD PICASSO EYES?



I KEEP
THINKING—IF
WE SAVED OUR
MONEY...

WE'LL NEVER
HAVE FIVE THOUSAND
DOLLARS.

I KNOW.



WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT
TO JUST STEP UP TO HIM, SAY
"PABLO, HERE'S FIVE THOUSAND!
GIVE US THE SEA. THE SAND. THE
SKY. OR ANY OLD THING YOU
WANT. WE'LL BE HAPPY..."

I THINK YOU'D
BETTER GO IN THE
WATER NOW.

WHITE FIRE SHOWERED UP WHEN HE CUT THE WATER.

DURING THE AFTERNOON GEORGE WENT INTO THE OCEAN. AT LAST, WITH THE SUN'S DECLINE, THEIR BODIES ALL LOBSTER COLORS AND COLORS OF BROILED SQUAB AND GUINEA HEN, THE NOW WARM, NOW COOL PEOPLE TRUDGED FOR THEIR WEDDING-CAKE HOTELS.

THE BEACH LAY DESERTED FOR ENDLESS MILE UPON MILE, SAVE FOR TWO PEOPLE.

FAR ALONG THE SHORE, ANOTHER SHORTER, SQUARE-CUT MAN WALKED ALONE IN THE TRANQUIL WEATHER. HIS CLOSE-SHAVEN HEAD WAS DYED ALMOST MAHOGANY BY THE SUN, AND HIS EYES WERE CLEAR AND BRIGHT AS WATER.

GLANCING ABOUT, HE SAW THE SUN SLIDING DOWN THE LATE COLORS OF THE DAY, AND THEN, HALF TURNING, SPIED A SMALL WOODEN OBJECT ON THE SAND.

ONE WAS GEORGE SMITH, TOWEL OVER SHOULDER, OUT FOR A LAST DEVOTIONAL.

IT WAS NO MORE THAN A SLENDER STICK FROM A LIME ICE CREAM DELICACY LONG SINCE MELTED AWAY.

SMILING, HE PICKED THE STICK UP.

WITH ANOTHER GLANCE AROUND TO REINSURE HIS SOLITUDE, THE MAN STOOPED AGAIN...



...AND, HOLDING THE STICK GENTLY, WITH LIGHT SWEEPS OF HIS HAND, BEGAN TO DO THE ONE THING IN ALL THE WORLD HE KNEW BEST HOW TO DO.

HE BEGAN TO DRAW INCREDIBLE FIGURES ALONG THE SAND.

HE SKETCHED ONE FIGURE AND THEN MOVED OVER AND, STILL LOOKING DOWN, COMPLETELY FOCUSED ON HIS WORK NOW, DREW A SECOND AND A THIRD FIGURE...



A FOURTH...



A FIFTH...

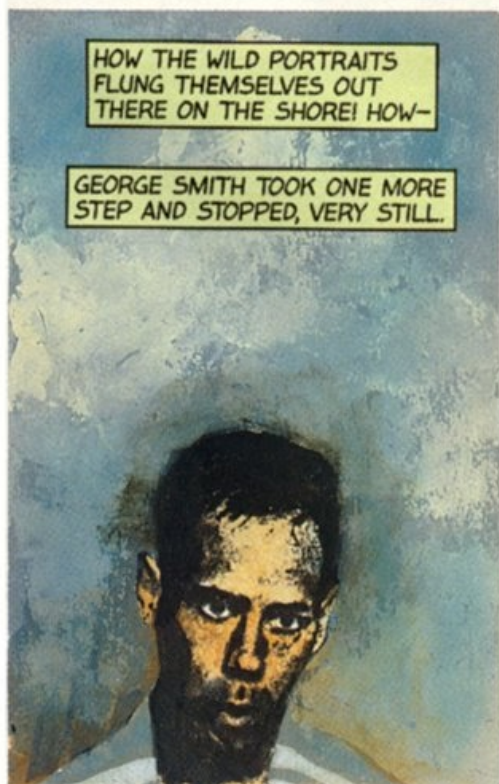


A SIXTH...



AS GEORGE SMITH DREW NEAR, IT WAS OBVIOUS WHAT THE MAN WAS UP TO.

GEORGE SMITH CHUCKLED. OF COURSE, OF COURSE...ALONE ON THE BEACH, THIS MAN—HOW OLD? SIXTY-FIVE? SEVENTY?—WAS SCRIBBLING AND DOODLING AWAY. HOW THE SAND FLEW!




HOW THE WILD PORTRAITS FLUNG THEMSELVES OUT THERE ON THE SHORE! HOW—

GEORGE SMITH TOOK ONE MORE STEP AND STOPPED, VERY STILL.




THE STRANGER DID NOT SEEM TO SENSE THAT ANYONE STOOD IMMEDIATELY BEHIND HIM AND THE WORLD OF HIS DRAWINGS IN THE SAND.

GEORGE SMITH LOOKED DOWN AT THE SAND. AND AFTER A LONG WHILE, LOOKING, HE BEGAN TO TREMBLE.




ALONG THE SHORE IN A NEVER-BROKEN LINE,
THE HAND, THE WOODEN STYLUS OF THIS
MAN, BENT DOWN IN FEVER AND RAINING PER-
SPIRATION, SCRIBBLED, STITCHED, WHISPERED,
STAYED, THEN HURRIED ON...

AND THE SAND IN THE DYING LIGHT
WAS THE COLOR OF MOLTEN
COPPER ON WHICH WAS NOW
SLASHED A MESSAGE THAT ANY
MAN IN ANY TIME MIGHT READ AND
SAVOR, DOWN THE YEARS. EVERY-
THING WHIRLED AND POISED IN ITS
OWN WIND AND GRAVITY.

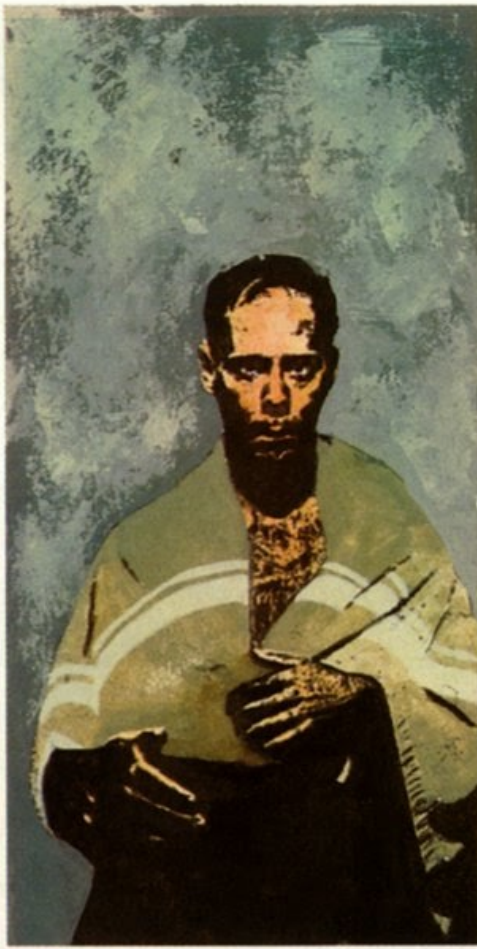


THE ARTIST GLANCED UP, SUR-
PRISED TO FIND SOMEONE SO
NEAR. HE STOOD THERE, LOOKING
FROM GEORGE SMITH TO HIS OWN
CREATIONS, FLUNG LIKE IDLE FOOT-
PRINTS DOWN THE WAY.

HE SMILED AT LAST AND SHRUGGED
AS IF TO SAY. LOOK WHAT I'VE DONE;
SEE WHAT A CHILD? YOU WILL FORGIVE
ME, WON'T YOU? ONE DAY OR ANOTHER
WE ARE ALL FOOLS...YOU TOO, PER-
HAPS? SO ALLOW AN OLD FOOL THIS,
EH? GOOD! GOOD!



BUT GEORGE SMITH COULD ONLY LOOK AT
THE LITTLE MAN WITH THE SUN-DARK SKIN
AND THE CLEAR SHARP EYES AND SAY THE
MAN'S NAME ONCE, IN A WHISPER, TO HIMSELF.



GEORGE WANTED TO RUN BUT DID NOT RUN.

WHAT? GRAB A SHOVEL, DIG, EXCAVATE, SAVE A CHUNK OF THIS ALL-TOO-CRUMBLING SAND? FIND A REPAIRMAN, RACE HIM BACK HERE WITH PLASTER OF PARIS TO CAST A MOLD OF SOME SMALL FRAGILE PART OF THESE?

THE CAMERA! RUN, GET IT, GET BACK, AND HURRY ALONG THE SHORE, CLICKING, CHANGING FILM.



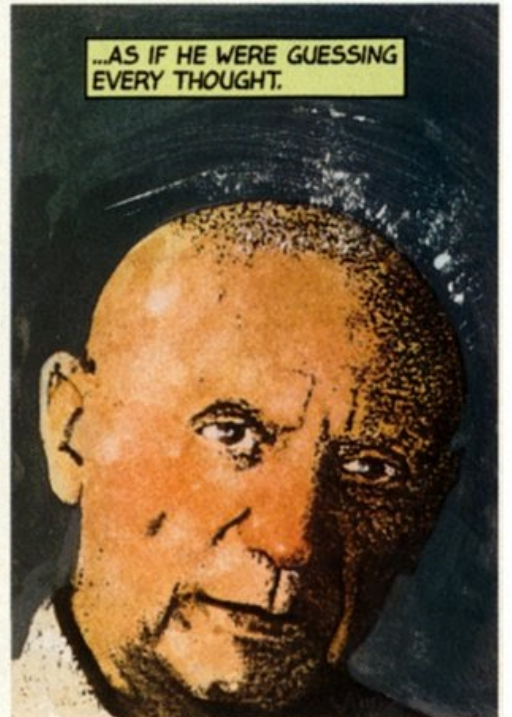
THE SUN BURNED FAINTLY ON HIS FACE. HIS EYES WERE TWO SMALL FIRES FROM IT. THE SUN WAS HALF UNDERWATER, AND AS HE WATCHED, IT SANK THE REST OF THE WAY IN A MATTER OF SECONDS.




THE GREAT ARTIST HAD DRAWN NEARER AND NOW WAS GAZING INTO GEORGE SMITH'S FACE WITH GREAT FRIENDLINESS...




...AS IF HE WERE GUESSING EVERY THOUGHT.






NOW HE WAS NODDING HIS
HEAD IN A LITTLE BOW.

NOW THE ICE CREAM STICK HAD
FALLEN CASUALLY FROM HIS FINGERS.




NOW HE WAS GONE, WALKING BACK
DOWN THE BEACH TOWARD THE SOUTH.

GEORGE SMITH STOOD LOOKING AFTER
HIM. AFTER A FULL MINUTE HE DID THE
ONLY THING HE COULD POSSIBLY DO.



HE WALKED A LONG WAY, LOOKING DOWN
AT THE FREE-RUNNING BACCHANAL.

AND WHEN HE CAME TO THE END OF THE
ANIMALS AND MEN HE TURNED AROUND AND
STARTED BACK IN THE OTHER DIRECTION, JUST
STARING DOWN AS IF HE HAD LOST SOMETHING
AND DID NOT QUITE KNOW WHERE TO FIND IT.



HE KEPT ON DOING THIS UNTIL
THERE WAS NO MORE LIGHT IN THE
SKY OR ON THE SAND TO SEE BY.





RAY
BRADBURY

SPECIAL

THE
ILLUSTRATED
MAN

I
The Illustrated Man

II
The Visitor

III
Zero Hour



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John
Bryan
93/92

INTRODUCTION

"The Illustrated Man" quite obviously derives from my meetings with Mr. Electrico, the carnival magician who, with his Electric Chair, entered my life Labor Day weekend 1932 when I just twelve. Enamored of a man who could have himself electrocuted every night and survive in front of hundreds of customers, I returned one Saturday afternoon to find him seated outside the carnival tent, almost as if he were waiting for me. He asked if I would like to meet the performers of his small carnival. I immediately said yes and he led me inside the tent where I chatted with the Fat Lady, the Human Skeleton, and the Tattooed Man, whom I later relabeled as "illustrated." He had what seemed to be several hundred snakes, lions, kangaroos, tigers, and pretty ladies stitched in ink all over his good-sized body. Perspiring in the hot sunlight, it almost seemed that his illustrations were dissolving and coming to life.

Remembering this when I was thirty, I wrote the story and it became the front, side, and back of *The Illustrated Man* when it was published forty-two years ago. I made the illustrations move on his flesh to tell stories. Two of them were "The Visitor" and "Zero Hour." "The Visitor" is the work of a boy and man raised in the Baptist Church and wondering if Christ, as promised, would one day have a Second Coming. And what would happen if he arrived on a far planet the day before some astronauts landed? "Zero Hour" is another extension of my childhood. In my twenties, I remembered how brutally honest, and sometimes destructive, boys and girls can be. I let them loose in my story to see what would happen. Now it's your turn to find out!

Roy Bradbury

Mark Chiarello's fully painted art can be seen in DC's *Batman/Houdini: The Devil's Workshop* graphic novel and Marvel's *Hellraiser*, as well as the *Stars of the Negro Leagues* (Eclipse), *Star Wars* and Topps's *Dracula* trading card sets. He was recently appointed Color Editor at DC Comics.

Guy Davis is perhaps best known for his work on his Harvey-nominated *Baker Street* series. Recently, he has worked on several projects for DC/Vertigo, including the first story arc for *Sandman Mystery Theater*, written by Matt Wagner, and a *Phantom Stranger* one-shot. Guy is a self-taught artist and lives in Okemos, Michigan.

P. Craig Russell, a twenty-year comics veteran, is known for his adaptations of literary and musical works, including "The Magic Flute," "Salome," Kipling's "Jungle Book" stories, and Oscar Wilde's *Fairy Tales*. Recent works include *Robin 3000*, "Hothouse" for DC's *Legends of the Dark Knight*, and "Ramadan," a *Sandman* story for DC/Vertigo. Russell swept the 1993 comics awards, winning an Inkpot, an Eisner, and a Harvey.

Michael Lark, a talented newcomer, first gained notice for his two collaborations with Debra Rodia, *Airwaves* and *Taken Under*, published by Caliber Press. He is currently working on another Byron Preiss project, an adaptation of Raymond Chandler's *The Little Sister* for the *Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe* series, to be published by Marvel Comics.

Jack Kamen started working as a comic book artist in the 1930s with Chesler Studios, which included work on Fawcett's superhero line. After the Second World War, he went to work for Jerry Iger Studios, where he did work for Fiction House's "The Ghost Gallery" in *Jumbo Comics*. Kamen then drew romance books for Harvey Comics until Al Feldstein lured him to EC Comics in 1954. Jack drew for EC's horror and science fiction titles until 1955. He then went into commercial advertising and never looked back. He now lives in comfortable semi-retirement with his wife, splitting their time between New Hampshire and Florida.

Tim Bradstreet is a noted illustrator of role-playing games and comics. Recent work includes *Vampire: A Collection of Dark Portraiture* (White Wolf Game Studio), *Hawkworld* (DC Comics), *Andrew Vachss's Hard Looks* (Dark Horse Comics), and Clive Barker's *Age of Desire* (Eclipse Comics).

Julia Koch began her comics career in 1992 as the art director for Eclipse Comics, working on projects as diverse as *Hot Pulp*, *True Crime Comics*, and *The Spawn Spogz*. She is now the director of A Virtual Kaliedoscope studio.

Rodney Dunn was born on Norman Rockwell's birthday in 1968. He has worked in TV animation on the *Beetlejuice* animated series, in comics on *MISTER X*, and in advertising.

Cover by Mark Chiarello

Frontispiece by Tim Bradstreet

Color by Grant Goleash

The Illustrated Man

Adapted by Guy Davis

Lettered by John Workman

Color by Julia Koch

The Visitor

Script & breakdowns by P. Craig Russell

Finished art by Michael Lark

Lettered by John Workman

Color by Michael Lark and Julia Koch

Zero Hour

An EC Classic

Adapted by Jack Kamen

Color by Rodney Dunn

Special thanks to Don Congdon,
Dan Martin at Sprintout,
and Uncle Ray.

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PROLOGUE

IT WAS A WARM AFTERNOON IN EARLY SEPTEMBER WHEN I FIRST MET THE ILLUSTRATED MAN. WALKING ALONG AN ASPHALT ROAD. I WAS ON THE FINAL LEG OF A TWO WEEKS' WALKING TOUR OF WISCONSIN.

LATE IN THE AFTERNOON I STOPPED, ATE, AND WAS PREPARING TO STRETCH OUT AND READ WHEN THE ILLUSTRATED MAN WALKED OVER THE HILL.



I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS ILLUSTRATED THEN. ONLY THAT HE WAS TALL, ONCE WELL-MUSCLED, BUT NOW GOING TO FAT WITH A FACE LIKE A CHILLO'S THAT SAT UPON HIS MASSIVE BODY.



DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND A JOB?



I'M AFRAID NOT.



I HAVEN'T HAD A JOB THAT'S LASTED IN FORTY YEARS...

WELL, THIS IS AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO SPEND THE NIGHT. DO YOU MIND COMPANY?



NO... NO.



THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

ANOTHER REASON I KEEP MY COLLAR BUTTONED UP IS THE CHILDREN. THEY FOLLOW ME ALONG COUNTRY ROADS. EVERYONE WANTS TO SEE THE PICTURES, AND YET NOBODY WANTS TO SEE THEM.

YES...IT KEEPS RIGHT ON GOING.

ALL OF ME IS ILLUSTRATED.

LOOK.

WHY... THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL!

HOW CAN I EXPLAIN ABOUT HIS ILLUSTRATIONS? IF EL GRECO HAD PAINTED MINIATURES IN HIS PRIME, NO BIGGER THAN YOUR HAND, INFINITELY DETAILED, PERHAPS HE MIGHT HAVE USED THIS MAN'S BODY FOR HIS ART.

THE COLORS BURNED IN THREE DIMENSIONS. THEY WERE WINDOWS LOOKING IN UPON FIERY REALITY. THE MAN WAS A WALKING TREASURE GALLERY. THIS WASN'T THE WORK OF A CHEAP CARNIVAL TATTOO MAN WITH THREE COLORS AND WHISKEY ON HIS BREATH. THIS WAS THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A LIVING GENIUS... VIBRANT, CLEAR, AND BEAUTIFUL.

OH, YES...I'M SO PROUD OF MY ILLUSTRATIONS THAT I'D LIKE TO BURN THEM OFF. I'VE TRIED SANDPAPER, ACID, A KNIFE...

FOR, YOU SEE, THESE ILLUSTRATIONS PREDICT THE FUTURE.



THE VISITOR

IT WAS A QUIET MORNING ON MARS, WITH THE DEAD SEA BOTTOM FLAT AND SILENT—NO WIND ON IT. THE SUN WAS CLEAN AND COOL IN THE EMPTY SKY. SAUL WILLIAMS LOOKED WEARILY OUT OF HIS TENT AND THOUGHT ABOUT HOW FAR AWAY EARTH WAS. BUT WHAT COULD YOU DO WHEN YOUR LUNGS WERE FULL OF "BLOOD RUST."

THIS BLOOD RUST—IT FILLED YOUR MOUTH AND YOUR NOSE; IT RAN FROM YOUR EARS, YOUR FINGERNAILS; AND IT TOOK A YEAR TO KILL YOU. THERE WAS NO KNOWN CURE ON EARTH, AND REMAINING WOULD CONTAMINATE AND KILL THE OTHERS.

THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS SHOVING YOU IN A ROCKET AND SHOOTING YOU OUT TO EXILE ON MARS.



Adapted by P. CRAIG RUSSELL and MICHAEL LARK

HE WANTED VERY MUCH
TO BE BACK ON
EARTH.

HE TRIED EVERY WAY POSSI-
BLE TO BE IN NEW YORK
CITY.

SOMETIMES, IF HE SAT RIGHT AND HELD HIS
HANDS A CERTAIN WAY, HE DID IT. HE COULD
ALMOST SMELL NEW YORK.



HELLO,
SAUL.

ANOTHER
MORNING. I
WANT EARTH
SO BAD IT
HURTS.

IT IS AN AFFLICTION OF
THE RUSTED ONES.

THE MAN ON THE BLANKET
WAS UNMOVING AND VERY
PALE, AS IF HE MIGHT
VANISH IF YOU TOUCHED
HIM.



I WISH TO GOO
THAT YOU COULD
AT LEAST TALK.
WHY IS IT THAT
INTELLECTUALS
NEVER GET
THE BLOOD
RUST AND
COME UP
HERE?



COME TOMORROW,
PERHAPS I'LL HAVE
ENOUGH STRENGTH
TO TALK ABOUT
ARISTOTLE. THEN
I'LL TRY.
REALLY,
I WILL.



I WISH I WERE AS SICK
AS YOU. THEN MAYBE I
WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT
BEING AN INTELLECTUAL.
THEN MAYBE I'D GET
SOME PEACE.



YOU'LL GET AS BAD AS I
AM NOW IN ABOUT SIX
MONTHS. THEN YOU WON'T
CARE ABOUT ANYTHING
BUT... SLEEP.

SLEEP
WILL BE LIKE A
WOMAN TO YOU,
FRESH, GOOD,
AND FAITHFUL.



IT'S A NICE
THOUGHT...



SAUL WALKED
AWAY.



THE BRIGHT METAL
FLASHED ON THE
SKY.

A MINUTE LATER, THE ROCKET LANDED ON THE SEA BOTTOM. A MAN STEPPED OUT, CARRYING HIS LUGGAGE. TWO OTHER MEN IN PROTECTIVE GERMICIDE SUITS ACCOMPANIED HIM, BRINGING OUT VAST CASES OF FOOD, SETTING UP A TENT FOR HIM. ANOTHER MINUTE AND THE ROCKET RETURNED TO THE SKY.

SO THIS IS MARS.



NEW YORK GREW UP OUT OF THE DESERT. MADE OF STONE AND FILLED WITH MARCH WINDS. NEONS EXPLODED IN ELECTRIC COLOR. YELLOW TAXIS GLIDED IN A STILL NIGHT. BRIDGES ROSE AND TUGS CHANTED IN THE MIDNIGHT HARBORS. CURTAINS ROSE ON SPANGLED MUSICALS.

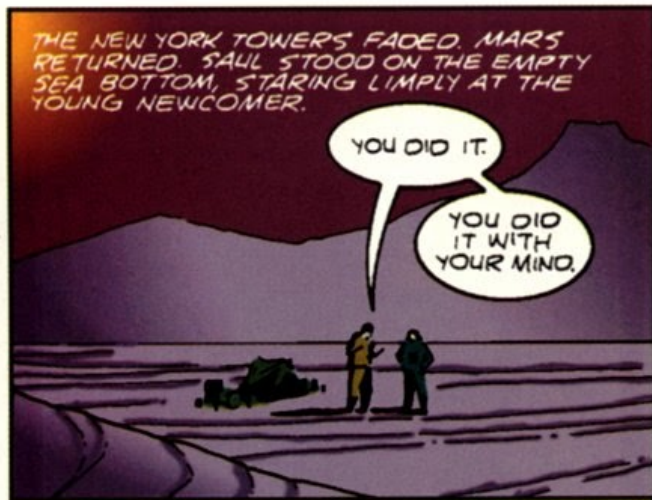


WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
I'M GOING CRAZY! STOP IT! THIS CAN'T BE!



IT IS.





THE NEW YORK TOWERS FADED. MARS RETURNED. SAUL STOOD ON THE EMPTY SEA BOTTOM, STARING LIMPLY AT THE YOUNG NEWCOMER.

YOU DID IT.

YOU DID IT WITH YOUR MIND.



YES.



OH, BUT I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE.

YOU CAN'T KNOW HOW GLAD I AM!



IT WAS HIGH NOON. THEY HAD BEEN TALKING ALL THROUGH THE WARM MORNING TIME.

AND THIS ABILITY OF YOURS?

IT'S JUST SOMETHING I WAS BORN WITH.

MY MOTHER WAS IN THE BLOWUP OF LONDON IN '57. I WAS BORN TEN MONTHS LATER.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'D CALL IT. TELEPATHY AND THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE, I SUPPOSE.

I USED TO HAVE AN ACT BACK ON EARTH. MOST PEOPLE THOUGHT I WAS A CHARLATAN.

I DIDN'T LET ANYONE KNOW I WAS REALLY GENUINE. IT WAS SAFER NOT TO LET IT GET AROUND TOO MUCH.



YOU SURE SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME. WHEN NEW YORK CAME RIGHT UP OUT OF THE GROUND THAT WAY, I THOUGHT I WAS INSANE.



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE DOING NOW, MOST OF ALL?

SAUL PUT DOWN HIS CUP. HE TRIED TO HOLD HIS HANDS VERY STEADY.



HE WET HIS LIPS.



I'D LIKE TO BE IN A LITTLE CREEK I USED TO SWIM IN IN MELLINTOWN, ILLINOIS WHEN I WAS A KID.

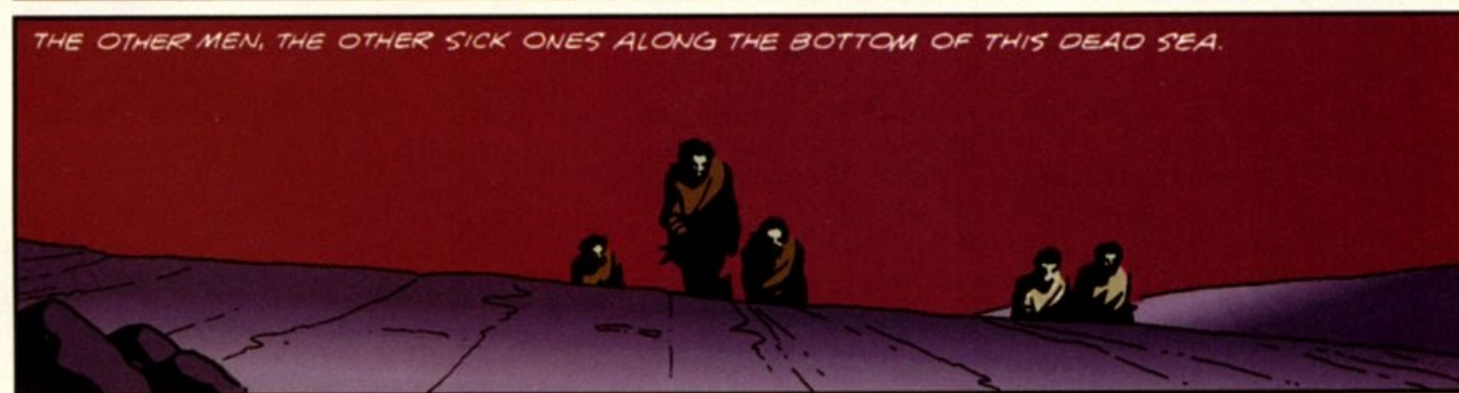


SAUL FELL BACK ON THE SAND, HIS EYES SHUT. FROM TIME TO TIME, HIS HANDS MOVED, TWITCHING EXCITEDLY.

LEONARDO MARK QUIETLY FINISHED HIS COFFEE.

SAUL BEGAN TO MAKE SLOW MOVEMENTS OF HIS ARMS, OUT AND BACK, GASPING WITH HIS HEAD TO ONE SIDE, HIS ARMS COMING AND GOING SLOWLY ON THE WARM AIR, STIRRING THE WARM SAND UNDER HIM, HIS BODY TURNING SLOWLY OVER.







SEE THOSE MEN COMING? SOME OF THEM ARE **INSANE!**

REALLY?

YES!



THEY DON'T LOOK VERY DANGEROUS.

YOU'D BE SURPRISED.

YOU'RE TREMBLING. WHY'S THAT?



DON'T YOU REALIZE THEY'LL FIGHT OVER YOU--KILL EACH OTHER--KILL **YOU** FOR THE RIGHT TO OWN YOU? WE HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO ARGUE. **COME ON!**



I'M GOING TO SIT RIGHT HERE UNTIL THOSE MEN SHOW UP. YOU'RE TOO POSSESSIVE. MY LIFE'S MY OWN.



YOU HEARD ME.



IT'S A **LIE!** FOR GOD'S SAKE... DON'T, MARK! THE MEN ARE COMING! YOU'LL BE KILLED!

LET THEM COME. I CAN FOOL THEM ALL.



NO!



WHEN NEW YORK WAS GONE, THERE WAS ONLY THE WIDE SOUNDLESSNESS OF THE DEAD SEA.



THE MEN WERE CLOSING IN AROUND HIM. HE HEADED FOR THE HILLS WITH HIS PRECIOUS CARGO, WITH NEW YORK AND GREEN COUNTRY AND FRESH SPRINGS AND OLD FRIENDS HELD IN HIS ARMS.

HE DID NOT STOP RUNNING.



SAUL RAN, IN THE CAVE ENTRANCE, PEERING DOWN INTO THE NIGHT-FILLED GULLY...



SHADOWS MOVED INTO THE CAVE MOUTH. THE OTHER MEN WERE THERE.

GOOD EVENING. COME IN, GENTLEMEN.

BY DAWN, THE ARGUMENTS AND FEROCITIES STILL CONTINUED. MARK HAD CREATED A MAHOGANY-PANELED CONFERENCE HALL AND A MARBLE TABLE AT WHICH THEY ALL SAT, RIDICULOUSLY BEARDED, EVIL-SMELLING, SWEATY AND GREEDY MEN, EYES BENT UPON THEIR TREASURE.

THE WAY TO SETTLE IT IS FOR EACH OF YOU TO HAVE CERTAIN HOURS OF CERTAIN DAYS. I'LL TREAT YOU ALL EQUALLY. LET'S SEE, NOW...

ON MONDAYS, SMITH. ON TUESDAYS, I'LL TAKE PETER AND I'LL FINISH WITH JOHNSON, HOLTZMAN, AND JIM ON WEDNESDAYS.

AS FOR SAUL, HE'S ON PROBATION UNTIL HE'S PROVED HE CAN BE A CIVIL PERSON ONCE MORE.

UNTIL THAT TIME, I'LL HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH HIM.

THE REST OF THE WEEK, I'M TO BE LEFT STRICTLY ALONE. IF YOU DON'T OBEY, I WON'T PERFORM AT ALL.

MAYBE WE'LL **MAKE** YOU PERFORM.

LOOK, WE'RE FIVE AGAINST HIS ONE. WE CAN MAKE HIM DO ANYTHING WE WANT.

DON'T BE IDIOTS.

HE'S TELLING US WHAT HE'LL DO. WHY DON'T WE TELL **HIM**? ARE WE BIGGER THAN HIM, OR NOT?

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM. HE'S CRAZY. YOU KNOW WHAT HE'LL DO, DON'T YOU?

HE'LL GET YOU ALL OFF-GUARD AND KILL YOU ONE BY ONE.

AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, **ONE OF YOU HAS A GUN!**

SEARCH! FIND THE ONE WITH THE GUN OR YOU'RE ALL DEAD!

THAT DID IT.

JOHNSON FELL
BACK, FEELING
IN HIS JACKET.

ALL RIGHT,
HERE. YOU...
SMITH.

BANG

BANG

BANG
BANG

STOP!

LOOK,
YOU
FOOLS!

NEW YORK SOARED UP AROUND THEM OUT OF ROCK AND CAVE AND SKY. SUN GLINTED ON HIGH TOWERS. THE ELEVATED THUNDERED; TUGS BLEW IN THE HARBOR. AND, IN THE CENTER OF NEW YORK, BEWILDERED, THE MEN STUMBLED.

BANG
BANG
BANG

TIMES

LONG
JOKES NEAREST
BENNETT
RESTAURANT
BROADWAY
AT
100
W. 42ND ST.

Wagon

SAUL RAN FORWARD...

...CRASHED
AGAINST
JOHNSON...

...GRAPPLED FOR
THE GUN.

IT FIRED
AGAIN.

BANG

BANG

THEY STOOD. THEY CEASED STRUGGLING. THERE WAS A TERRIBLE SILENCE.

NEW YORK SANK DOWN INTO THE SEA WITH A HISSING, BUBBLING SIGHING; WITH A CRY OF RUINED METAL AND OLD TIME, THE GREAT STRUCTURES LEANED, WARPED, FLOWED, COLLAPSED.

MARK STOOD AMONG THE BUILDINGS. THEN, LIKE A BUILDING

...A NEAT, RED HOLE DRILLED INTO HIS CHEST-

WORDLESS, HE FELL.



THERE WAS THE SOUND OF SOMEONE DIGGING IN THE EARTH. "WE DON'T NEED HIM, ANYHOW," SAID SOMEBODY, MUCH TOO LOUDLY.



SLEEP WE'LL ALL GO TO SLEEP NOW. WE HAVE THAT MUCH, ANYWAY. GO TO SLEEP AND TRY TO DREAM OF NEW YORK AND ALL THE REST.



HE CLOSED HIS EYES WEARILY, THE BLOOD GATHERING IN HIS NOSE AND HIS MOUTH AND IN HIS QUIVERING EYES.

HOW DID HE DO IT? HOW DID HE BRING NEW YORK UP HERE AND MAKE US WALK AROUND IN IT?



LET'S TRY. IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD. **THINK!** THINK OF NEW YORK AND CENTRAL PARK AND THEN ILLINOIS IN THE SPRING. APPLE BLOSSOMS AND GREEN GRASS.



IT DIDN'T WORK. IT WASN'T THE SAME. NEW YORK WAS GONE AND NOTHING HE COULD DO WOULD BRING IT BACK. HE WOULD RISE EVERY MORNING AND WALK ON THE DEAD SEA LOOKING FOR IT... AND NEVER FIND IT.



AND FINALLY LIE, TOO TIRED TO WALK, TRYING TO FIND NEW YORK IN HIS HEAD, BUT NOT FINDING IT.

THE LAST THING HE HEARD BEFORE HE SLEPT WAS THE SPADE RISING AND FALLING AND DIGGING A HOLE INTO WHICH...



WITH A TREMENDOUS CRASH OF METAL AND GOLDEN MIST AND ODOR AND COLOR AND SOUND...



NEW YORK COLLAPSED, FELL, AND WAS BURIED.





EACH ILLUSTRATION IS A LITTLE STORY. IF YOU WATCH THEM, IN A FEW MINUTES THEY TELL YOU A TALE.

SO PEOPLE FIRE ME WHEN MY PICTURES MOVE. THEY DON'T LIKE IT WHEN VIOLENT THINGS HAPPEN IN MY ILLUSTRATIONS.



IN THREE HOURS OF LOOKING, YOU COULD SEE EIGHTEEN OR TWENTY STORIES ACTED RIGHT ON MY BODY. YOU COULD HEAR VOICES AND THINK THOUGHTS.



IT'S ALL HERE, JUST WAITING FOR YOU TO LOOK. BUT MOST OF ALL, THERE'S A SPECIAL SPOT ON MY BODY.

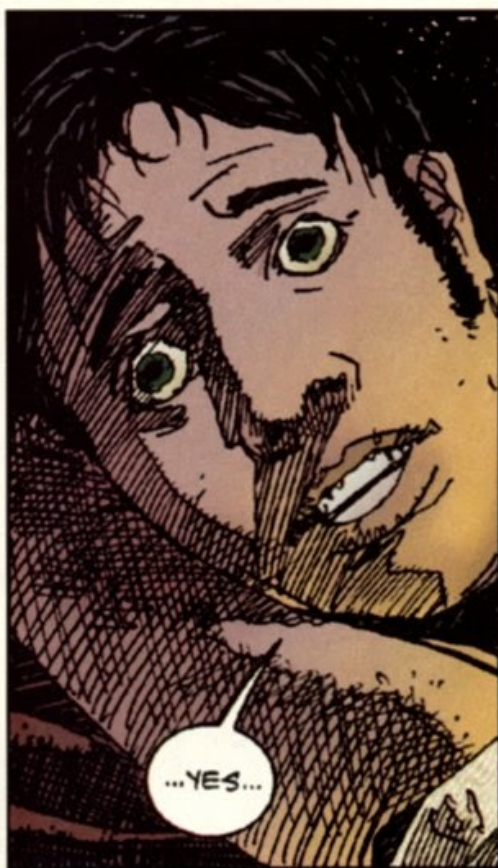
SEE? THERE'S NO SPECIAL DESIGN, JUST A JUMBLE.



WHEN I'VE BEEN AROUND A PERSON LONG ENOUGH, THAT SPOT CLOUDS OVER AND FILLS IN. IF I'M WITH A WOMAN, HER PICTURE COMES THERE ON MY BACK IN AN HOUR AND SHOWS HER WHOLE LIFE-- HOW SHE'LL LIVE, HOW SHE'LL DIE, WHAT SHE'LL LOOK LIKE WHEN SHE'S SIXTY.

AND IF IT'S A MAN, AN HOUR LATER HIS PICTURE'S HERE ON MY BACK. SHOWING HIM FALLING OFF A CLIFF OR DYING UNDER A TRAIN. SO I'M FIRED AGAIN.

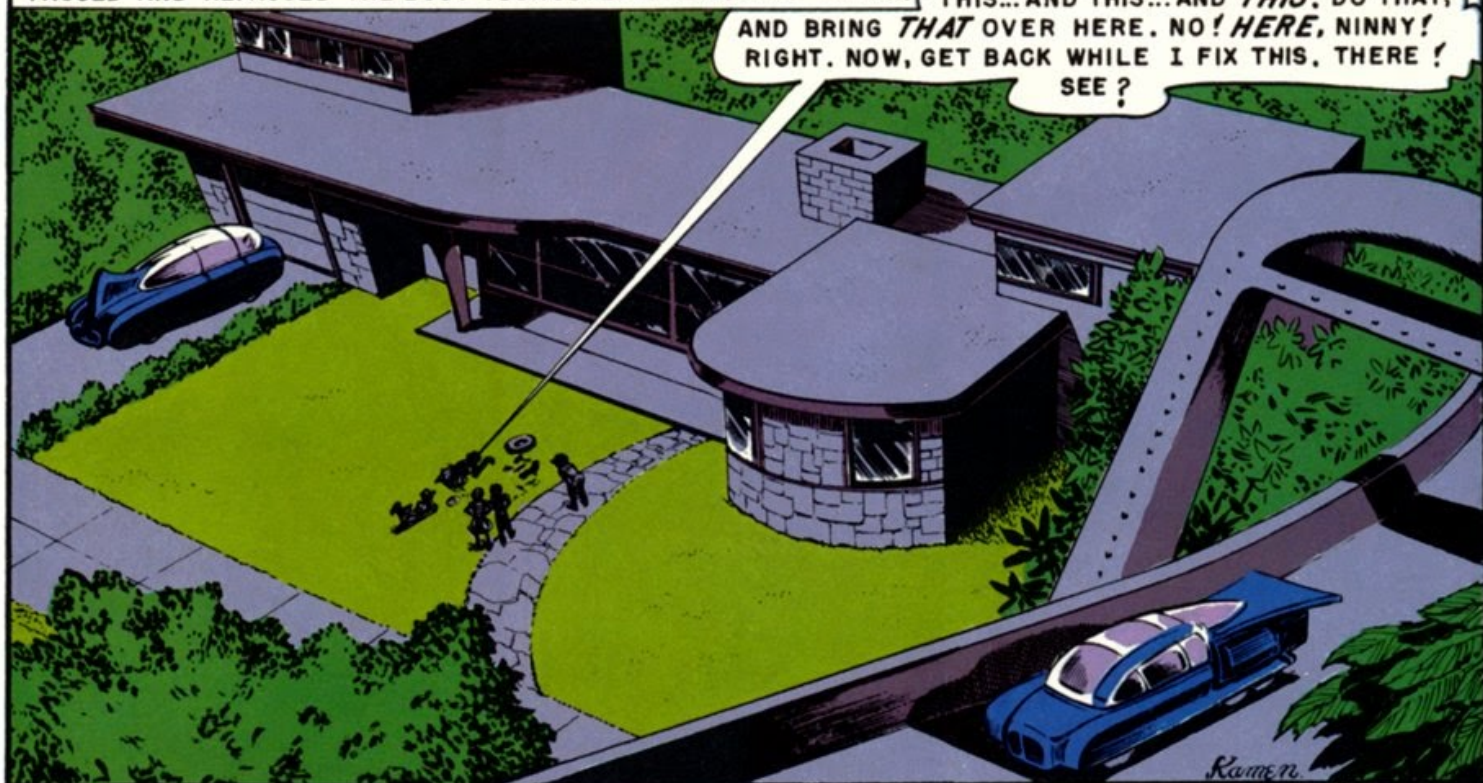




ZERO HOUR

IT WAS AN INTERESTING FACT THAT THE FURY AND BUSTLE OCCURRED ONLY AMONG THE YOUNGER CHILDREN. THE OLDER ONES, THOSE TEN YEARS AND MORE, DISDAINED THE AFFAIR AND MARCHED SCORNFULLY OFF ON HIKES, OR PLAYED A MORE DIGNIFIED GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK ON THEIR OWN. MEANWHILE, PARENTS CAME AND WENT IN CHROMIUM BEETLE CARS. REPAIRMEN CAME TO REPAIR VACUUM ELEVATORS IN HOUSES, TO FIX FLUTTERING TELEVISION SETS, OR HAMMER UPON STUBBORN FOOD-DELIVERY TUBES. THE ADULT CIVILIZATION PASSED AND REPASSED THE BUSY YOUNGSTERS...IGNORING THEM...

THIS... AND THIS... AND *THIS*. DO THAT, AND BRING *THAT* OVER HERE. NO! *HERE*, NINNY! RIGHT. NOW, GET BACK WHILE I FIX THIS. THERE! SEE?



THE CHILDREN CATAPULTED ACROSS GREEN LAWNS, SHOUTING AT EACH OTHER. MINK RAN INTO HER HOUSE, ALL DIRT AND SWEAT...

HEAVENS, MINK, WHAT'S GOING ON?

THE MOST EXCITING GAME EVER!



FOR HER SEVEN YEARS, MINK WAS LOUD AND STRONG AND DEFINITE! HER MOTHER, MRS. MORRIS, WATCHED HER AS SHE YANKED OUT DRAWERS AND RAT-TLED PANS AND TOOLS INTO A LARGE SACK...

STOP AND GET YOUR *BREATH*.

I'M ALL RIGHT! OKAY IF I TAKE THESE THINGS, MOM?



ALL RIGHT! BUT DON'T *DENT* THEM. ER... WHAT'S THE *NAME* OF THE GAME, DEAR?

INVASION!



IN ALMOST EVERY YARD ON THE STREET, CHILDREN BROUGHT OUT KNIVES AND FORKS AND POKERS AND OLD STOVEPIPES AND CAN OPENERS...



I WANNA PLAY.

GO AWAY. YOU'D JUST MAKE FUN OF US.

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD JOSEPH CONNERS SURVEYED THE YOUNGER CHILDREN WITH RELUCTANCE AND A CERTAIN WISTFULNESS...

HONEST, I WOULDN'T MAKE FUN. LET ME PLAY...

YOU'RE TOO OLD. YOU'D ONLY LAUGH AND SPOIL THE INVASION.



JOSEPH WALKED OFF SLOWLY. HE KEPT LOOKING BACK, ALL DOWN THE BLOCK. MINK TALKED EARNESTLY TO SOMEONE NEAR THE ROSE BUSH... THOUGH THERE WAS NO ONE THERE. ANNA TOOK NOTES ON A PAD...



TRIANGLE!

HUH? HOW DO YOU SPELL IT?

MINK'S MOTHER, FROM HER UP-STAIRS WINDOW, GAZED DOWN...

T-R-I... OH, SPELL IT YOURSELF! NOW... BEAM!

I STILL HAVEN'T GOT TRI... ANGLE DOWN YET!

A-N-G-L-E, ANNA!



OH, THANKS, MRS. MORRIS!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, ANNA!

NOW... BEAM! THEN... FOUR-NINE-SEVEN-A-AND-B-AND-X...



MINK'S MOTHER WITHDREW, LAUGHING, TO DUST THE HALL WITH AN ELECTRO-DUSTER MAGNET...

... AND A FORK... AND A STRING... AND A HEX... HEX... HEX AGONY... HEXAGONAL!



AT LUNCH, MINK GULPED MILK AT ONE TOSS AND WAS AT THE DOOR. MRS. MORRIS SLAPPED THE TABLE...

YOU SIT RIGHT BACK DOWN AND FINISH...

BUT MOM! DRILL'S WAITING FOR ME!



DRILL? WHAT A PECULIAR NAME? WHO'S DRILL?

YOU DON'T KNOW HIM, MOM. YOU'LL MAKE FUN. EVERYBODY POKES FUN. GEE, DARN. I GOT TO RUN IF WE WANT TO HAVE THE INVASION!



WHO'S INVADING WHAT?

MARTIANS... INVADING EARTH!



MRS. MORRIS HID HER MOUTH
BEHIND HER HAND...

YOU'RE **LAUGHING!**
SEE? YOU'D...
YOU'D **KILL** DRILL
AND EVERYBODY.

I...I
DIDN'T **MEAN**
TO, MINK. SO...
SO DRILL'S A
MARTIAN?

UH-HUH! AND HE'S HAD A HARD
TIME. THEY COULDN'T FIGURE A
WAY TO **ATTACK EARTH**, DRILL
SAYS IN ORDER TO MAKE A **GOOD**
FIGHT, YOU GOT TO HAVE
A **NEW WAY OF SUR-
PRISING** PEOPLE! AND
YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE
HELP...FROM YOUR ENEMY!

A
FIFTH
COLUMN,
EH?

YEAH! THAT'S WHAT DRILL
SAID. AND THEY COULDN'T
FIGURE A WAY TO **SURPRISE**
EARTH OR **GET HELP**...UNTIL,
ONE DAY, THEY THOUGHT OF
THE CHILDREN!

WELL!

AND THEY THOUGHT OF
HOW **GROWNUPS** ARE SO
BUSY THEY NEVER PAY
ATTENTION TO CHILDREN!
AND THEN THERE'S THE
DIM-DIMS!

**DIM-
DIMS?**

DIMENSIONS!
FOUR OF 'EM!
AN' THERE'S SOME-
THING ABOUT KIDS
UNDER NINE, AND
IMAGINATION...
AND ...

WELL, IF
YOU WANT
TO HAVE YOUR
INVASION
BEFORE YOUR
BATH...YOU'D
BETTER HURRY
ALONG...

DRILL SAYS I WON'T HAVE
TO TAKE **BATHS** AFTER
THE **INVASION**. NO MORE
BATHS... AND WE CAN
STAY UP TILL **TEN O'CLOCK**
TO WATCH **TELEVISION**...
AND GO TO **TWO MOVIES**
ON SATURDAY 'STEAD OF
ONE... AND HAVE ALL
THE **COMICS** WE WANT...

WELL,
MR. DRILL
BETTER
MIND HIS
P'S
AND **Q'S**.
I'LL
CALL UP
HIS
MOTHER
AND...

DRILL SAYS PARENTS ARE
DANGEROUS. 'CAUSE **WHY?**
'CAUSE YOU DON'T BELIEVE
IN **MARTIANS!** THEY'RE
GOING TO LET **US** RUN
THE WORLD! THE **KIDS**...

THAT'S
NICE!
NOW,
RUN
OUT
AND
PLAY...

MINK WENT TO THE DOOR...

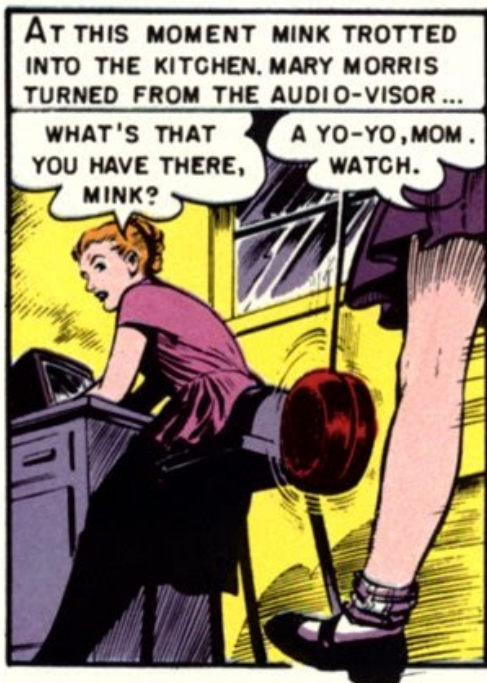
MOM! WHAT'S
**IM-PRES-
SION-ABLE**
MEAN?

WHY, IT MEANS...
IT MEANS...TO
BE A **CHILD**,
DEAR.

MINK RAN OUT, THEN STUCK HER
HEAD BACK IN...

MOM! I'LL BE SURE
YOU WON'T BE HURT
MUCH...REALLY!

WELL...
THANKS!



ON THE AUDIO-VISOR HELEN

LAUGHED... TIM BROUGHT ONE OF THOSE YO-YOS IN THIS MORNING, MARY. WHEN I GOT *CURIOUS*, HE SAID HE WOULDN'T *SHOW* IT TO ME. AND WHEN *I TRIED* TO WORK IT, FINALLY, IT *WOULDN'T* WORK!



MRS. MORRIS WHISPERED...

YOU'RE ...NOT *IMPRESSIONABLE*, HELEN! *WHAT?*



NEVER MIND. SOMETHING I *THOUGHT* OF. CAN I *HELP* YOU, HELEN?

I WANTED TO GET THAT BLACK AND WHITE CAKE RECIPE...



THE HOUR DROWE D BY. THE DAY WANED. THE SUN LOWERED IN THE PEACEFUL BLUE SKY. ONE LITTLE GIRL RAN OFF CRYING...

MINK, WAS THAT PEGGY ANN CRYING?

YEAH. SHE'S A SCAREBABY. WE WON'T LET HER PLAY, NOW. SHE'S GETTING TOO OLD TO PLAY.



MINK WAS BENT OVER IN THE YARD NEAR THE ROSE BUSH...

I GUESS SHE *GREW* UP ALL OF A SUDDEN.

MINK! DID YOU *HIT* PEGGY ANN?



NO. HONEST. YOU ASK HER. IT WAS SOMETHING... WELL, SHE'S JUST A SCAREDY PANTS. GOLLY. *GOLLY!*

WHAT'S WRONG?



THE RING OF CHILDREN DREW IN AROUND MINK WHERE SHE SCOWLED AT HER WORK WITH SPOONS AND A KIND OF SQUARE-SHAPED ARRANGEMENT OF HAMMERS AND PIPES...

DRILL'S *STUCK* HALF-WAY.

HALF-WAY?



IF WE COULD ONLY GET HIM *ALL* THE WAY THROUGH, IT'D BE *EASIER*. THEN ALL THE *OTHERS* COULD COME THROUGH *AFTER* HIM!

CAN I... *HELP?*



NO'M, THANKS. I'LL FIX IT.

ALL RIGHT, DEAR. HALF AN HOUR MORE. THEN BATH-TIME...





THE HOUSE SHOOK WITH A DULL SOUND. THERE WERE OTHER EXPLOSIONS IN OTHER YARDS ON OTHER STREETS...

UP THIS WAY!
IN THE
ATTIC!

IT'S NOT UP
THERE! IT'S
OUTSIDE!

THERE WAS NO TIME TO ARGUE WITH HENRY. LET HIM THINK HER INSANE! SHRIEKING, SHE RAN UPSTAIRS...

I'LL SHOW YOU!
HURRY! HURRY!
I'LL SHOW YOU!

MARY!

ANOTHER EXPLOSION OUTSIDE. THE CHILDREN SCREAMED WITH DELIGHT AS IF AT A GREAT FIREWORKS DISPLAY. HENRY RAN AFTER MARY...UP INTO THE ATTIC...

THERE, THERE. WE'RE
SAFE UNTIL TONIGHT!
MAYBE WE CAN SNEAK
OUT. MAYBE WE CAN
ESCAPE.

ARE YOU
CRAZY,
MARY?
WHAT'S
GOT INTO
YOU?

SHE WAS BABBLING WILD STUFF NOW. IT CAME OUT OF HER. ALL THE SUBCONSCIOUS SUSPICIONS AND FEAR. SHE SLAMMED THE DOOR...LOCKED IT... FLUNG THE KEY INTO A FAR, CLUTTERED CORNER...

WHY'D YOU THROW
THE KEY AWAY,
MARY?

QUIET! THEY
WILL HEAR
US. OH, GOD,
THEY'LL FIND
US SOON ENOUGH...

BELOW THEM, MINK'S VOICE. THEN FOOTSTEPS CAME INTO THE HOUSE. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS...

WHO'S THAT
TRAMPING AROUND
DOWN THERE?

MOM?
DAD?
WHERE
ARE YOU?

HEAVY FEET. TWENTY, THIRTY, FORTY OF THEM...

WHO'S
DOWNSTAIRS?

HUSH, HENRY!
OH, NONONONO!
PLEASE BE QUIET!
THEY MIGHT GO
AWAY!

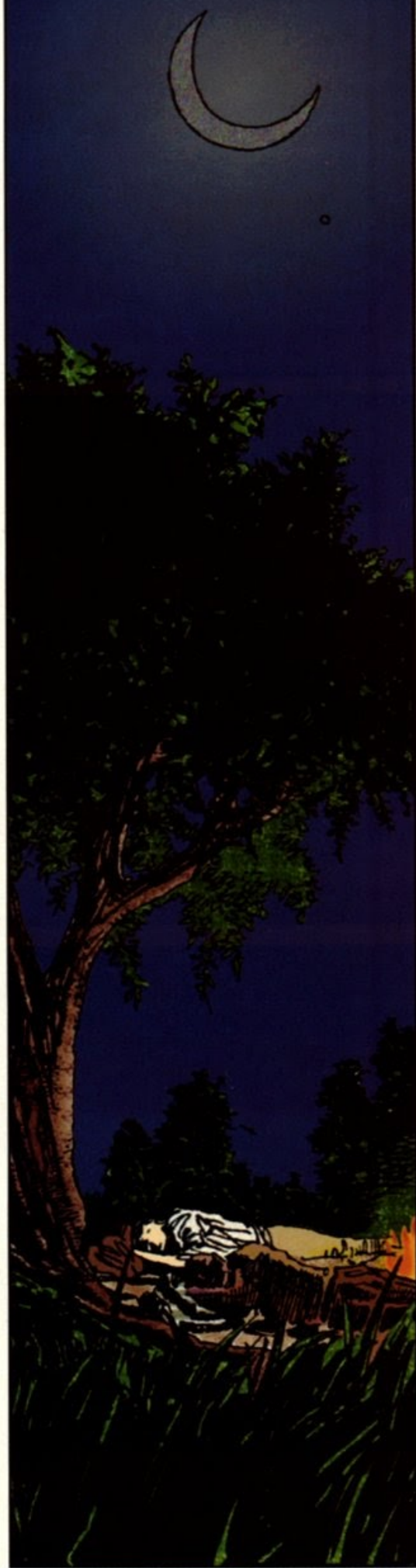
HEAVY, VERY HEAVY FOOTSTEPS CAME UP THE STAIRS. MINK LEADING THEM. THEY TREMBLED TOGETHER IN SILENCE IN THE ATTIC, MR. AND MRS. MORRIS. THEY STOOD SHIVERING IN THE DARK SILENCE...

A LITTLE HUMMING SOUND, THE ATTIC LOCK MELTED. THE DOOR OPENED. MINK PEERED INSIDE...TALL BLUE SHADOWS BEHIND HER...

MOM? DAD?

PEEKABOO!

EPILOGUE



I HAD SEEN
WHAT THERE
WAS TO SEE.



THE STORIES
WERE TOLD;
THEY WERE
OVER AND
DONE.



THERE REMAINED ONLY
THAT EMPTY SPACE UPON THE
ILLUSTRATED MAN'S BACK,
THAT AREA OF JUMBLED
COLORS AND SHAPES.





I RAN DOWN THE ROAD
IN THE MOONLIGHT.
I DIDN'T LOOK BACK.



A SMALL TOWN LAY AHEAD.
DARK AND ASLEEP. I KNEW
THAT, LONG BEFORE MORNING,
I WOULD REACH THE TOWN...

BRADBURY

CHRONICLES



THE APRIL WITCH
BY JON J MUTH

TRAPDOOR
BY ROSS MACDONALD

PICASSO SUMMER
BY JOHN VAN FLEET
& JOHN NEY RIEBER

THE ILLUSTRATED MAN
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ZERO HOUR
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